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UNCLAS ABU DHABI 02816

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APPROVED: PAO:HMEDELSON
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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 ABU DHABI 002816

SIPDIS

STATE FOR NEA/ARP; NEA/PPD; NEA/RA; INR/R/MR; PA; INR/NESA;
INR/B; IIP/G/NEA-SA
WHITE HOUSE FOR PRESS OFFICE; NSC
SECDEF FOR OASD/PA
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E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [OIIP](#) [KMDR](#) [TC](#)
SUBJECT: SPECIAL MEDIA REACTION: CONDEMNATION OF RELIGIOUS
CURRICULUM IN THE GCC

1. Summary: Abu Dhabi-based semi-official Arabic daily "Al-Ittihad" carries a column by Kuwaiti intellectual, Dr. Ahmad Al-Baghdadi, strongly condemning religious curriculums in the Gulf Cooperation Council Countries (GCC). He quotes an official report by the UAE government on religious curriculums in public schools to validate his argument. He attributes the current state of decline and human rights violations in the Muslim world to a school curriculum obsessed with the day of judgement which ignores practical matters and positive values such as ethics, tolerance and friendship. End summary.

2. Dr. Ahmad Al-Baghdadi wrote in his weekly column in "Al-Ittihad" 8/17:
"A UAE government report discussed the teaching of Islamic religion in the UAE. We must commend its officials for their courage and supervision of this project, and hope that the government modifies the teaching of these curriculums in the interest of the UAE people. The report included nine important observations that should be taken into

consideration by the other Gulf States. The situation in my country, Kuwait, is hopeless as long as the government continues to satisfy the religious current."

13. "The most important observation is the fourth, which notes that:
`The curriculum leads to mental disturbances and psychological disorders for the young generation because it focuses, at early stages, on values of threats, terrifying talk about death, the day of judgment, hell and agony. It should be just the opposite. The curriculum does not take the psychological nature of the students into consideration. At grade four, it starts talking about heaven and hell and the infidels terrorizing the Muslims during the time of the prophet. At grade five, they come back and talk about heaven and hell'."
14. "Let's ask ourselves a simple question: what is the benefit of explaining life after death for a child who is not yet ten years old? What kind of knowledge would he/she acquire by absorbing this information? In what kind of practical application could he/she use it in life? The answer to all these questions is nothing. The Saudi schools provide practical lessons on how to wash the dead and in reality the expatriates are doing this job. The other question, is what adults would benefit out of this. Isn't it much better to teach other topics such as ethics, friendship and tolerance? Do we have the right to wonder later that children and the younger generation accept the value of killing to reach paradise and to avoid the agony and torture of hell?."
15. "There is no doubt that these curriculums exist in all Muslim nations due to the lack of commitment from the ministries of education in teaching the young how to love life and how to build their own world. Have those officials in charge of these curriculums thought about the consequences of teaching these subjects and other values such as death. Death is just like life, something natural that should not be given a bigger size than it actually deserves. We all live our own lives after we become free from the restrictions of school and the control of our families and societies."
16. "Remembering the day of judgment does not build nations. Muslims, with all their religious teachings, have the worst nations, not because they are religious, but because they like to spend their time doing nothing and in pursuit of unproductive things. Just look around and see how much political and social corruption exist and the level of human rights violations. It is no exaggeration to say that Muslims are the only religious group who act in non-accordance with their religion and who say what they do not do. They are the only group that believes they will get to paradise merely because they were born Muslims. They are the only group that exchanges reason for religious thinking in administering their own lives. Just look around and see whether there are any ruins of the mortal wonders in the world by Muslims?"